The Hampden Hippocrat

A Bulletin for the Hampden District of the Massachusetts Medical Society

VOLUME VI SPRING, 1947 Number 1

Sermon from the Sticks

Old Doc. Hampden, who practices up in the hills beyond Westfield, was in town the other day. The folks up there say there is more wisdom and medical sense under his old grey hat than under all the hospital roofs in Boston.

"Going to Atlantic City?" I asked Doc., who prides himself on keeping abreast of the times.

"No," he said, "I don't believe I shall. As a matter of fact," he said as he lit his pipe, "I'm getting a little weary of medical meetings. First off, the chairman gets up and says, 'Now we have a long program this morning and we don't have much time,' whereupon he gives a five-minute biography of the first speaker. Finally he announces 'and now Dr. Whiffenpoof, who has made a life-time study of the problem, will talk to us on the subject of Nail-biting Among Edentulous Octogenarians.' About this time the loud speaker goes on the fritz. It's either too loud, or too low, or it squeals, or it quits entirely. Well they fuss with it awhile and finally call in the electrician who plugs it in right and then Dr. Whffenpoof says 'This is a very large subject and one which I shall not be able to cover adequately in the time allotted to me.' So then he lists all his colleagues and technicians who have aided in his investigations and tells you what Hippocrates and Vesalius thought about the topic, and then with half his time used up he gets started on his own work. 'First slide,' he says, and then the fun begins. The lights go out and a lantern slide goes on the screen. First it's upside down, then it's hindside to and finally they get it straight, but it's the wrong one. After trying four or five they get the proper one on the screen. It looks like a page out of the Encyclopedia Brittanica superimposed on a problem in trigonometry. I'm supposed to digest what is on the screen, listen to the lecturer, prop up the joker next to me who has fallen asleep on my shoulder and take notes in the dark, all at the same time. Right about now the speaker decides he wants a pointer, so he and the chairman stumble around in the dark cracking their skulls together and finally he gets his stick so he can point out the important things on the screen. About this time a late-comer to the hall stumbles over the lantern cord so that light goes off and the room is darker than a woodchuck's hole on a rainy night. Well this finally gets fixed and the speaker warms up again, and just when he's got the old goat ready to gnaw on his nails the chairman rings a bell, time's up, and the next speaker is panting at the barrier. He turns out to be a foreigner, and whether he is speaking broken English or broken German no one seems to know, but everyone wishes him a speedy return to Alt Wien. So half the audience goes out for a breath of air, kicking me in the shins as they

(Continued on Page 8)

Hampden Hippocrat

"Life is short and art is long, the occasion fleeting, experience fallacious and judgment difficult." —Hippocrates, 430 B.C.

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EDITORIAL

Just when the matter of Veterans' Care was ready for filing as solved, the administrative contract that was signed for us by the Blue Shield has been rendered null and void. The General Court has refused to pass the necessary enabling act because of opposition by the American Legion. Apparently the politically-minded veterans saw this popular football slipping out of their reach.

As a result, there seems to be nothing left for the Massachusetts Medical Society to do but retire from the field. More than a year of effort to set up a reasonable fee-schedule to meet General Hawley's specification of medical care for veterans and their dependents on a private scale is wasted. The General's tune, too, has changed, because a tax-conscious Congress is cracking down on federal expenditures. The Veterans Administration will do their own administering, pay what they please and appoint such physicians as please them in the so-called modified Kansas manner.

The Hippocrat bespeaks forbearance from all parties concerned, in view of the circumstances, with the realization in mind that the individual veteran must not be forgotten in the midst of contention. He deserves adequate care and will get it, we feel sure, as always from a patient profession that counts not the costs.

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Information regarding them would be appreciated.

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Past Presidents of District Society

1911	Seeley, Ralph
1912	Flood, Everett
1913	Weston, George
1914	Cooley, A. L.
1915	Weiser, Walter
1916	Taylor, George
1917	Birnie, John
1918	Damon, A. L.
1919	Damon, A. L.
1920	Birnie, John
1921	Gabler, George L.
1922	Hodskins, M. B.
1923	Benner, R. S.
1924	Henderson, George
1925	Leary, W. S.
1926	Janes, George H.
1927	Bates, E. A.
1928	Bagg, E. P.
1929	Sweet, F. B.
1930	Pearson, M. W.
1931	Schadt, George
1932	Allen F. H.
1933	Naurison, J. J.
1934	Douglas, A. J.
1935	Bacon T. S.
1936	Gear, P. E.
1937	Rice, A. G.
1938	Moriarty, P. M.
1939	Hagler, Frederic

Harris Pharmacy

139 Chestnut Street

Springfield **Massachusetts**

1940 Bigelow, J. B.
1941 Corcoran, George
1942 Steele, George L.
1943 Knowlton, Edward A.
1944 Dwyer, John E.
1945 Hosmer, Merrill
1946 Franz, Adolph, Jr.

NOTICE: Dr. Gabler of 4 Bullard Avenue, Holyoke, is retiring from practice and has an Allison Table plus other office equipment for sale. We will miss his presence and loyalty in the active work of our County Society.

Meetings

Two meetings of the Hampden District Medical Society have been held since the annual session of April 30, 1946. On November 26, 1946, Dr. Edward P. Bagg, Jr., President-elect of the Massachusetts Medical Society, brought information concerning the state organization. Tuesday evening, February 25, 1947, a dinner meeting, complimentary to Dr. Dwight O'Hara, president of the State Society, was held at the Hotel Highland. Dr. John F. Conlin, newly elected Director of Medical Information and Education, spoke on "What the Massachusetts Medical Society Offers the Physician."

Since the 1946 annual meeting, the following six members were lost by death:

Dr. James B. Atwater
Dr. George C. Bergeron
Dr. Sydney R. Carsley
Dr. Philip A. Kees
Dr. Ira N. Kilburn and
Dr. John E. Overlander

In addition to many members lost and gained by transfer, twenty-seven new members were admitted by our local society.

We are happy to announce that, to the best of our knowledge, all but six members have officially returned from military servce. Of interest to many was our large advertsement which appeared in the Springfield Newspaper on Sunday, June 23, 1946. This listed by name approximately one hundred society members who had, at that time, returned to practice.

As of today, the Hampden District Medical Society has a total membership of 379. Of these, 355 are in active home practice; six remain in military service. Retired members total 18.

Respectfully submitted,
George C. Steele
Secretary

May 7, 1947

Poor Business Men?

The poorest business man in the world is the doctor.

This can be considered as a compliment but not in the era in which we are living.

Americans cooperated during the war (some for a price) but economically the world is now at one another's throats.

Medicine and the clergy are two outstanding exceptions, but even here there is a tendency to do as the Romans do.

The desire for pleasure and security can become so great that we may look upon our work as a business rather than a means of serving humanity.

The trust given to us is too great to have it violated. It is the backbone of therapy and we are shortsighted if we destroy our tools.

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Why are fads in treatment used in private practice rarely found in the hospital clinics. Some feel that finance controls the interest we have in patients.

Now as never before must we question our inner motives in our relations with patients. We have their trust but education makes them look askance at what might be considered unusual.

This and not state medicine is the greatest problem facing medicine today.

It would be well for medical societies and hospitals to look upon this aspect of qualifications in selecting their members rather than the academic point of view.

Webster defines a doctor as a learned man, but by the public he is considered a humanitarian.

That Is Not In The Sport

The other night I accepted once again the standing invitation of Ambroise Pare, barber-surgeon extraodinary, that is open to all to join his "journeys in diverse places" in the pursuit of learning — learning the art of surgery in particular. Nearly every time we set out, something new is discovered, or at least brought anew to the surface of consciousness.

Once before, mention was made of the unsuccessful attempt at invading France from the sea by the English in 1543 with a veritable forest of ships. Ambroise Pare was there in Low Brittany on the job, as surgeon to the company of the late M. de Rohan, who, in turn, had been dispatched there by the King with de Laval and others to rally their followers in defense of their country. Afterward, the defenders were garrisoned in the Camp of Marolle until news finally came of the dispersal of the enemy fleet in England's harbors.

In the interim, troops being troops needed entertainment. To sustain their morale, such games were played as "running at the ring" and fencing — both conducive of surgeons' meat, i.e., injuries. Village girls are persuaded to sing in the tongue of Low Brittany— and doubtless, troops being troops, the songs were low too. We have not figured yet how they danced the *triori* without moving feet or hips. Perhaps Frances Langford would be in a better position to demonstrate, because in 1944 G.I.'s went through France too fast to learn much about such physiological facts. But, shades of the Valley Arena, at other times according to perambulating Ambroise, wrestlers of the towns and villages were booked to compete for prize. And our omnipresent surgeon not seldom was called upon to return injured bones to proper alignment or into vacant sockets.

There was one little strong man of Brittany, he reported, whose skill upset all comers, even the gigantic Dativo, a pedagogue who was said to be one of the best wrestlers in all Brittany. Of course present-day fans, in particular those who cause the smoke-blue welkin to ring each Wednesday night there in Holyoke's erstwhile gas house, would discount the event as hippodroming. Not so Dativo. In the next fall the giant thrust his elbow into the pit of the little man's stomach and, in the words of our eye-witness, "killed him stark dead." And knowing this, the ruffian picked up his long cassock and slunk away, tail between his legs. "Seeing," wrote Pare, "the little man came not

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again to himself, either for wine, vinegar or any other thing presented to him, I drew near to him, felt his pulse which did not beat at all. Then I said he was dead." The assembled Bretons spoke as one man,—and thus gave us our caption,—"That is not in the Sport."*

Our scientific-minded barber-surgeon student, compassionate as he was, of course could not miss the opportunity. "I must needs open the body to know the cause of this sudden death," he confessed. He noted much fresh blood in the thorax, but in spite of diligent search could find no internal opening. Pare lived an age or two too early, of course, to have learned of the dissecting aortic aneurysm.

What are the lessons learned from this little jaunt backward into Low Brittany?

First, it is clear how Ambroise Pare's ever alert and intelligent mind earned his master's degree in surgery, and his humanitarian spirit the esteem of his fellow men. (He anticipated the American College of Surgeons by nearly four ceturies in post-mortem requirements!)

Secondly, while books alone were not enough for him, at least for us they make such profitable journeys possible.** Thirdly, his recompense did not consist entirely of approbation. M. de Rohan gave him 50 double ducats and a horse, de Laval a nag for his man, another a diamond worth thirty crowns.

Fourthly, we twentieth centurians thought we innovated something in the U.S.O., but now we know that even though Bob Hope was not yet forecast, some of his smart cracks doubtless were putting Breton midriffs to the test.

And last but not leastly, if you must watch those fake grunt-and-groaners take their turns at winning on or off the mat, wait until the Purple Flash and other lady wrestlers are billed; they might perhaps solve the problem *a triori* and so, in the end, make amends.

As for me, I was cured of this obsession some years ago when a slinking Dativo of a pickpocket mulcted me of a whole week's payroll. *Name of a dog!* —of a truth, "that is not in the Sport"!

S. Q. Lapius

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* If you insist, "Andraze meuraquetenes rac un bloa so abeuduex henelep e barz an gouremon enel ma hloa engoustun."

** Cosult the Harvard Classics, Vol. 38, p. 13.

Hospitalization for the Chronic Case

What more fitting time is there to give thought to the twilight of life than at this period when youth is bursting into blossom in schools and universities throughout the country?

Most of us have relatives or friends who have completed their education and are now thinking of the future. They have their thoughts on the work they will do in the world and the success they will be.

It is unfortunate that every person who leaves a place of learning will not be a success. Some will gain worldly goods and store them against the time when it will be necessary to use them against the lack of further earning power.

But there will be those who will earn no more than the bare needs of existence and then when their earning pow-

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er is over will look about in bewilderment.

This could be written as of 50 years ago and then we could view the situation as current one. In this respect we could see those in our communities who have to depend on others for the roof over their heads and the food for their chronic stomachs.

And today there is no local institution where these people may go and spend the twilight years in peace, comfort and in communion with each other in common infirmity of age.

Hospitals as we have them now cannot care for those that are not ill; merely in need of a place to stay and a home in which they may receive the necessities of life.

Housing shortages make it impossible for the son or daughter to be expected to take the old folks in, cater to them and give up their own youth and enjoyments in the dotage of latter years.

Common sense tells us it is impractical to expect old age to be a blessing to any of the parties concerned. And so there is one alternative.

We must give more thought and take more action towards the formation of a chronic hospital. Most of us are agreed it is a necessity. We all know it will make life more bearable for all, young and old alike.

But we must start the ball rolling. Name committees, plan the raising of funds, interest towns, cities, the state and if necessary the federal government in the project.

It will take money and time. Foresight as to the size to cover the needs must be a consideration.

The task is a large one, but surely there are some among us who will come forward and be willing to devote a part

This space was reserved for the article you failed to contribute to the Hippocrat

BACKGROUND

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of their life to making so many lives worth living.

Fifty years ago a chronic hospital was a necessity of the future. Today is that future.

Let's not procrastinate. Action is what we want so that fifty years from now we won't be writing and urging the same thing. There are those who are working toward a partial solution. Newspaper editorials and city fathers have recognized the need. The doctors know. The Hippocrat is interested. Are you?

The following letter is self-explanatory:

22 May, 1947

Dr. Adolph Franz, Jr., President
Hampden District, Massachusetts
Medical Society,
Holyoke, Massachusetts.

Dear Sir:

The Army Medical Library desires to have a file of your publication, *The Hampden Hippocrat,* included in its collection of medical journals, and we are writing to ask if we can be put on your free mailing list to receive issues as published and any available back issues.

It is suggested for your convenience that your reply be made on the inclosed carbon copy and returned to this Library in the self-addressed franked envelope.

Thank you for your courtesy in this matter.

Very sincerely yours,
Leslie K. Falk, Acting Chief
Acquisition Division

A Sermon from the Sticks

(Continued from Page 1)

leave. Then there are the seats,, they are always uncomfortable. Last meeting I went to I drew a cane-bottom chair and my rear end felt like a waffle for four days.

"No," said Doc., "I think I'll stay home and read about the convention later—but have a good time!"